



SENATOR
BILL HARDIMAN

E-Hardiman Herald



*Chair, Families & Human
Services Committee
Appropriations Committee;
Chair, Family Independence
Agency; Commerce Labor
& Economic Development,
Capitol Outlay;
Higher Education*

Bill to help low-income workers introduced

Senator Hardiman recently introduced Senate Bill 1001 which would exempt people who receive donated vehicles from charitable organizations from paying the state sales tax. Goodwill Association of Michigan is developing a statewide transportation initiative to provide vehicles for families and individuals working toward independence and self-sufficiency. Under current Michigan law, people are required to pay sales tax on the value of the vehicle they receive.

The “Wheels to Work” program takes donated vehicles and repairs them. The vehicles are then sold or donated to qualified recipients at below market prices based on the buyer’s financial status and the need for transportation to gain or continue employment. This proposed tax exemption only applies to recipients if they are employed at least 20 hours a week and continue employment after receiving the vehicle. If a potential recipient is employed less than 20 hours a week, they also could receive the tax exemption if they prove they must have a vehicle in order to begin or continue employment.

Abstinence education bills approved by Senate

The Senate passed two bills that give parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education. The abstinence-education package, Senate Bills 943 sponsored by Senator Wayne Kuipers and 944 sponsored by Senator Bill Hardiman, would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. The bills also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The legislation also would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. At least half of the members on the panels would have to be parents of students who attend the school districts. The bills drew strong support from the Michigan Family Forum, Citizens for Traditional Values and the Michigan Catholic Conference. After negotiations with

the governor's office and the Michigan Department of Education, the administration and various educational associations support the legislation as well.

“Help America Vote” compliance signed into law

Legislation that would make Michigan eligible to receive \$80 million in federal grant money was signed into law. The “Help America Vote Act” (HAVA) is a federal law that seeks to strengthen the election process by improving voting systems and making it easier for disabled Americans and military personnel to vote. Public Act 92 of 2004 will bring Michigan in line with HAVA by requiring all jurisdictions to have voter accessible machines for the disabled by 2006; allowing photo identification requests to verify information regarding a voter's registration; and providing for provisional balloting in elections, allowing voters not listed on voter registries to cast a ballot. President George W. Bush signed HAVA into law in response to Florida's 2000 presidential election.

Secretary of State Offices to be redesigned

Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land announced plans to offer two new types of branch offices – SOS Plus offices and SOS Super!Centers. The redesigned offices reflect customer comments and suggestions taken during her first eight months in office. SOS Plus offices will offer customers greater convenience and expanded service options including, additional staffing, improved facility access, shorter waiting lines and self-service stations for renewing registrations on credit cards. SOS Super!Centers will offer all of the same services and will be open on Saturdays. The first new SOS office is scheduled to open within 90 days. All new SOS Plus and SOS Super!Centers are expected to be open by the end of the year.

Invasive plant legislation to be introduced

In the coming weeks, Senate Republicans will introduce legislation prohibiting the sale and delivery of non-native plant species affecting the Great Lakes. If the problem is not addressed, non-native plants could have a detrimental affect on recreational activities, wildlife habitats and water quality, as well as pose a potential threat to public health. The legislation will include penalties and establish enforcement measures. The plant species targeted by the legislation include: African oxygen weed, Brazilian elodea, curly leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, European frogbit, flowering rush, giant salvinia, hydrilla, Japanese knotweed, parrot's feather, purple loosestrife, water chestnut, yellow flag iris and yellow floating heart.

Senate Republicans working hard to get Michigan working

Senate Republicans continue to fight for Michigan families by working hard on job-saving legislation designed to help get Michigan working. Legislation in both phases of the JOBS plan

is designed to improve Michigan's economy by creating new job opportunities, saving existing jobs, and promoting a friendlier and healthier business climate in Michigan. The JOBS plan – Job Opportunities for Business Success – is a broad Republican plan for revitalizing Michigan's economy. The Senate recently passed JOBS legislation to reduce the tax burden for small businesses that hire new employees and to prevent stringent business standards in Michigan from impeding economic development and job creation.

Legislation to make start-up businesses exempt from the Single Business Tax was recently reported out of committee and will be taken up by the full Senate soon. Legislation aimed at making it easier for businesses to file taxes and streamlining U.S.-Canadian border issues by calling for standardized border-related rules and regulations is currently being considered in committee. The recently introduced "Private Labs" package will create a state-lab accreditation program – establishing uniform performance standards and helping expand the state's use of private labs, providing additional job opportunities. Senate Republicans plan to introduce other key elements of the JOBS II plan in the coming weeks, including an equipment tax credit for high-speed Internet infrastructure; a "bureaucracy buster team" to look out for burdensome regulations on businesses; and incentives to keep bankruptcy assets in Michigan.

Contact Information

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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